

ISLAM DENOUNCES TERRORISM

By:

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striving in the path of Allah. It is the unceasing effort of an individual towards self purification and the collective struggle of a community against all forms of corruption, injustice and tyranny. Fighting for the cause of Islām (Qitāl) is but one aspect of Jihād.

It is a historical fact that from early dawn of history until now, humanity has suffered from local, civil and global wars. War is a necessity of existence, a fact of life. Even today humanity lives under the constant fear of war in many hot spots of the world. The realistic approach of Islām recognises war as lawful and justifiable course for the restoration of justice, freedom and peace. War is not an objective in Islām, it is resorted to under extraordinary circumstances when all other measures fail. Islām is a religion of peace, the daily greeting of a Muslim is 'peace', the word Muslim means 'peace'. Paradise is the abode of 'peace'. However when peace is undermined Islām permits Jihād as the ultimate arbiter of men's disputes under three circumstances;

- 1) As a defensive strategy.
- 2) As a punitive strategy.
- 3) As a preventive strategy.

The Humane laws of Jihād

The first Caliph Abu Bakr (R.A.) while dispatching the army to Palestine said: "O People! Stop. I enjoin upon you ten commandments. Remember them; do not embezzle
do not cheat
do not mutilate
do not break trust
do not kill a minor child or an old man or woman of advanced age
do not hew down a date palm nor burn it
do not cut down a fruit tree
do not slaughter a goat, cow or a camel except for food
maybe you will pass near people who have secluded themselves in convents, leave them in their seclusion.
people will present to you meals of many kinds, you may eat; but do not forget to mention the name of Allah". (Tabari).

Islām makes a distinction between ordinary civilians and combatants. It does not permit the killing of minors, women, the aged, sick and the monks.

The British historian Karen Armstrong, a former nun and expert on middle East history, in her book *Holy War*, which examines the history of the three divine religions makes the following remarks acknowledging peace in Islām; "....The word Islām comes from the same Arabic root as the word 'peace' and the Qur'ān condemns war as an abnormal state of affairs opposed to God's will. Islām does not justify a total aggressive war of extermination. Islām recognises that war is inevitable and sometimes a positive duty in order to end oppression and suffering. The Qur'ān teaches that war must be limited and be conducted in as humane way as possible. Mohammad had to fight not only the Meccns but also the Jewish tribes in the area and Christian tribes in Syria who planned on offensive against him in alliance with the Jews. Yet this did not make Mohammed denounce the People of the Book. His Muslims were forced to defend themselves but they were not fighting a 'holy war' against religion of their enemies. When Mohammed sent his freeman Zaid against the Christians at the head of a Muslim army, he told them to fight in the cause of God bravely but humanely. They must not molest priests, monks and nuns nor the weak and helpless people who were unable to fight. There must be no massacre of civilians nor should they cut down a single tree nor pull down any building". (Holy War-Karen Armstrong).

Conclusion

Muslims throughout the world are facing a defining moment. Muslims must recapture the true spirit of Islām, and reclaim it from those who have harmed its integrity and honour by attaching terrorism with Islām.

True Islām cannot in any way, shape or form be associated with terrorism. It is in complete contradistinction to it, for without a doubt, Islām itself denounces Terrorism.

Islām is a religion which provides and guarantees freedom of ideas, thought and life. It has issued commands to prevent and forbid tension, disputes, slander and even negative thinking among people. In the same way Islām is determinedly opposed to terrorism and all acts of violence.

One should note that recent ‘Muslim’ activities which are categorised as terrorism are but a part of the overall terrorist activities which take place around the globe. As is known, for centuries, various acts of terrorism have been carried out in different parts of the world by different groups for a variety of purposes. Sometimes a communist organisation, sometimes a fascist group, and some times radical separatist factions assume responsibility for these acts. The terrorist activities of the IRA and the Loyalist had been going on for more than three decades, Kurdish Workers Party, RAF (Red Army Faction) and Neo-Nazis in Germany, ETA in Spain, Red Brigades in Italy, Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and many other organisations seek to make their voices heard through terror and violence by killing innocent and defenceless people.

Demonising Islām

The media say, so consequently do the politicians, that this violence and terrorism actually goes back into the roots of Islām, into its religious roots with the dream of world domination, are deemed to be the roots of Islām. This is why the terminology is carefully tailored to fit this pattern.

If Pakistan makes a bomb, a nuclear bomb, it is christened as an ‘Islāmic bomb’. The Bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima was not a Christian bomb; the bomb made by India is not a Hindu bomb. Similarly Israel possesses nuclear armaments yet it is not labelled the Jewish bomb. There is little doubt that the IRA has very deep Catholic roots and the Protestant groups allied against it also have

deep religious roots. But no one deduces their terrorist activities to Christianity, to Catholicism or to Protestantism. Similarly the Buddhists were responsible for the genocide in Cambodia and bloodshed in Sri Lanka. This wasn’t attributed to Buddhism, nor was Stalin described as an atheist extremist. Muslim activities, however, are attributed immediately to Islām.

As far as Islām is concerned sanctity of human life, is supreme. Allah Ta’āla clearly tells us in the Qur’ān; “....if someone kills another person, unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption on earth- it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind..” (Surah Mā’ida V .32).

“Allah does not love corruption” (Surah Baqarah V.205).

“Eat and drink of Allah’s provision and do not go about the earth corrupting it.” (Surah Baqarah V. 60).

“Allah does not uphold the works of those who cause mischief.” (Surah Yunus V. 81).

With regards committing suicide Allah Ta’āla says; “Do not kill yourselves.” (Nisā V. 29). Thus Allah Ta’āla has declared suicide to be a sin. In Islām it is forbidden for anyone to kill himself or herself for no matter what reason. Committing suicide and carrying out suicide attacks, and causing the deaths of innocent people while doing so, is a total violation of Islāmic morality.

Allah Ta’āla tells us; “...do not go beyond the limits. Allah does not love those who go beyond the limits”. (Surah Baqarah V.190).

This verse clearly mentions that one should never transgress the limits and boundaries of Islām, no matter what the circumstances and degree of anger a Muslim is still bound to the laws of Allah. Taking matters into ones own hands and committing acts that are contrary to Islām is transgression which is greatly disliked by Allah. Even at the time of war the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reminded the believers numerous times about this subject and by his own practice became a role model

for others to follow. He addressed the believers who were about to go to war in the following terms; “Go to war in adherence to the religion of Allah. Never touch the elderly, women or children. Always improve their situation and be kind to them. Allah loves those who are sincere”. (Ahmad).

The Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) clarified the attitude Muslims must adopt even when they are in the middle of ragging battle; “Do not kill children. Avoid touching people who devote themselves to worship in churches! Never murder women and the elderly. Do not set trees on fire or cut them down. Never destroy houses”. (Bukhāri).

The Islāmic principles Allah proclaims in the Qur’ān account for this peaceful and temperate policy of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). In the Qur’ān, Allah Ta’āla commands Muslims to treat the non-Muslims kindly and justly; “Allah does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you over religion or driven you from your homes, or from being just towards them. Allah loves those who are just. Allah merely forbids you from taking friends those who have fought you over religion and driven you from your homes and who supported your expulsion...” (Surah Mumtahinah V.8-9).

Misconception of Jihād

The narrow vision of the media has portrayed Islām as a bloodthirsty, trigger happy, militant ideology bent on killing every non Muslim. The word ‘Jihād’ conjures up images of bearded men with fiery eyes marching down a street armed with guns and swords shouting “Allahu Akbar”. Muslims are branded as terrorists, extremists and fundamentalist. Islām has become synonymous with the sword and every skirmish or uprising is hallowed as Jihād. Both Muslims and non Muslims remain appallingly ignorant of the true spirit and implications of Jihād.

The word Jihād is generally misconstrued as holy war. It is often confused with “Qitāl” which means fighting. In Islāmic terminology Jihād means;